

2025 - 2026

MOBILE PHONE POLICY



MOBILE PHONE POLICY FOR ABBEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES:

- Teaching for Learning
- Inclusion Policy
- Pastoral Care
- E-Safety
- Safeguarding/child protection policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- ACC BYOD Updated Policy

SUMMARY:

To promote the safe, responsible, and purposeful use of mobile phones within the school environment, ensuring that they enhance learning opportunities, support effective communication when appropriate, and protect the wellbeing, privacy, and safety of all members of the school community. The policy aims to create a positive balance between the educational benefits of mobile technology and the need to maintain a respectful, distraction-free learning environment.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

The Legislative Context:

Circular Number: [2016/26](#) - EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL USES OF MOBILE DIGITAL DEVICES

Circular Number: [2016/27](#) - ONLINE SAFETY

HISTORY:

Policy updated: November 2025

By: Mrs C McNaghten
Designated Teacher for Child Protection and Safeguarding

Circulated to staff: November 2025

To be reviewed: June 2026 and then every two years

INTRODUCTION

Abbey Community College acknowledges that mobile phones and digital devices are an integral part of modern youth culture. However, the school's duty of care to safeguard every student remains the highest priority. This policy seeks to strike an appropriate balance between ensuring child protection and promoting the safe, responsible use of mobile phones and digital devices within the school environment.

DEFINITIONS:

Camera phone:	A mobile phone or device which can record still and/or moving images and audio recordings.
Text bullying:	The use of text, pictures or video clips to harass or bully another student either directly to their phone or spread to other phones or the internet.
Bluetooth/Infra-red:	Proximity transfer of information between phones using wireless or infrared technology.
Smartwatches:	Watches that have the ability to do everything a mobile phone or device can do.
Social Media	The range of platforms/ apps that children use to communicate such as Snapchat, Facebook and Instagram.

USE OF MOBILE PHONES AND DIGITAL DEVICES

Students are permitted to bring mobile phones or digital devices to school; however, these must be kept securely in their school bags or internal blazer pockets at all times, unless otherwise authorised.

Abbey Community College accepts no responsibility for the loss of, or damage to, any mobile phone or digital device, regardless of the circumstances.

Mobile phones may only be used before 8:55 a.m., during break time, and at lunchtime. They must not be used during lessons, in corridors between classes, or at any other time during the school day unless requested to do so by a member of staff.

For safeguarding reasons, the use of mobile phones in toilets or changing areas is strictly prohibited.

Students are not permitted under any circumstances to take photographs, videos, or audio recordings on school premises. Any student found to have done so will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Uploading any image, recording, or content to the internet that depicts Abbey Community College branding, staff, or students in school uniform will result in a disciplinary investigation.

The College reserves the right to suspend or expel students involved in such actions.

The use of mobile phones or digital devices is strictly forbidden in examination halls. All devices must be switched off and handed to the Invigilator before the start of the examination. In line with public examination regulations, possession of a mobile phone or device during an exam may result in disqualification.

BREACHES OF THE MOBILE PHONE AND DEVICE POLICY

Students who use their mobile phones or digital devices inappropriately during class will have the device confiscated until the end of the lesson and behaviour points for Mobile Phone Misuses added to SIMs.

If a student refuses to hand over their phone or device, the teacher will make an immediate referral to the Head of Department.

In cases of persistent misuse, the device will be confiscated by the Head of Department or Head of Year. It will be securely sealed in an envelope and stored in the school office until further notice.

If a student uses their phone or device in a serious or inappropriate manner — such as taking photographs, videos, or audio recordings — the Head of Year, Head of School or a Vice Principal will be informed. The device will be retained by the school, and a formal letter will be sent to the Parent/Guardian. The device will only be returned directly to the Parent/Guardian during a scheduled meeting with school staff.

SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS



CREATING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Supervised use of a mobile phone is permitted in the following circumstances:

For medical purposes; for example, to read or record blood sugar levels for students with diabetes.

In exceptional circumstances where the need has been identified by a member of the Pastoral Team.

When requested to do so by the class teacher for a limited duration, for educational purposes, which includes, but is not limited to:

- Recording an important date, e.g. a class test
- Taking a photograph of work from the board
- Downloading an image/video clip for use in a class project
- Using a quiz app as part of a lesson

USE OF MOBILE PHONES IN CORRIDORS

Students are not permitted to use or display mobile phones or digital devices in school corridors at any time, except during designated break and lunchtime periods.

At all other times - including transitions between lessons, and during movement to or from the toilets - mobile phones must remain switched off and securely stored in school bags or blazer pockets.

Any student observed using their phone in the corridor outside of permitted times will have the device confiscated immediately by a member of staff.

The confiscated phone will be placed securely in the school office until the next natural break in the school day. For example, if a phone is seen during the transition between Period 1 and Period 2, it will be held in the office until break time.

If a student leaves class for any reason and is found using their phone in the corridor, the same procedure will apply, and the phone will be confiscated.

In all cases of corridor misuse, behaviour points for 'Mobile Phone Misuse' will be added to SIMS by the office staff. This record is essential for monitoring patterns of inappropriate phone use and ensuring that parents and guardians are kept informed of recurring concerns.

Repeated breaches of this rule may result in further disciplinary action, in line with the school's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.

MOBILE PHONES IN SCHOOL

Please take a moment to review it carefully to ensure you are fully informed. **REMINDER**

POLICY:

- To help everyone stay focused and make the most of their learning, students are not allowed to use their phones during lessons.
- Students are welcome to use your phone during break and lunch, but outside of these times, we expect phones to be kept away.

PHONES IN CLASSES:

- If a phone is seen out during a lesson, the class teacher will remove it and return it at the end of the period.
- If a student refuses to hand over their phone, the Head of Department will be called, and the phone will be confiscated until the end of the school day.

FURTHER CONCERN:

- If a student refuses to cooperate with both the class teacher and the Head of Department, they will be removed from lessons for the rest of the day by either the Head of Year, Head of School, Vice Principal, or Principal, and parents will be contacted.

CORRIDORS:

- If a student has their phone out during or between lessons - including in corridors and toilets - at any time other than break or lunch, it will be confiscated. Your phone **MUST BE** out of sight.
- The phone will be left in the school office and can be collected at the next available break, lunchtime, or after school, whichever comes first.

THIS POLICY WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED

ALL STUDENTS MUST HAVE A PAPER COPY OF THEIR TIMETABLE. USING A MOBILE PHONE TO CHECK YOUR TIMETABLE IS NOT PERMITTED.

CREATING BETTER FUTURES

EXTRACT FROM PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

MOBILE PHONE CONSEQUENCES

Consequences Overview	Mild Concern (as deemed by school staff)	Moderate Concern (as deemed by a middle manager)	Severe Concern (as deemed by a middle/senior manager)
Unauthorised use of mobile phone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phone removed and given to student at the end of the lesson - If in school corridors, phone removed and staff member places this in the front office. The student can collect at the next applicable break. - Record on SIMS as Mobile Phone Misuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Head of Department intervention. Mobile phone removed from student and returned at the end of the day. - After school detention issued. - Recorded on SIMS as Defiance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Head of Year/Head of School/Vice Principal/Principal intervention. - Mobile phone removed and placed in front office for student to collect at the end of the day. - Parents contacted via Parent App message.
Defiance of the Mobile Phone Policy in the corridors	<p><i>Students are given a fair and clear opportunity to follow the school's mobile phone policy in the corridors. Any student who refuses to comply and fails to hand over their phone when requested by a teacher will be referred to a Head of School or Vice Principal. Continued refusal to follow instructions from a Vice Principal or the Principal will be treated as a Severe Non-Compliance issue and recorded accordingly</i></p>		<p><i>Refer to the Mobile Phone Policy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents/Guardian contacted - Suspension - Persistent refusal will result in Pastoral Board of Governors - Recorded on SIMS as Mobile Phone Misuse
Taking/Recording inappropriate content of a member of the school community	<p><i>Please note: If a student is found to be sharing inappropriate content, such as sexualised images, a referral to Social Services will be made automatically. Additionally, the PSNI's Central Referral Unit will also be informed due to the nature of the concern, even if the sharing of images was consensual. Additionally, the College does not condone the covert recording of staff by students or parents. Any covert recording will not be admissible as evidence in the event of a complaint.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phone confiscated and possible suspension - Parents contacted via phone call - Potential PSNI involvement - Potential Social Services involvement if safeguarding concerns are raised - Recorded on SIMS as Inappropriate use of Mobile Phone
Cyberbullying in school (during school hours)	<p><i>Refer to the Addressing Bullying Policy for specific actions regarding all types of bullying. Cyberbullying should be escalated to a 'moderate concern' due to its potential emotional and mental impact</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal warning or internal suspension - Parents contacted via phone call - BCAF generated - Behaviour Contract generated - Mobile phone no longer permitted within school - Recorded on SIMS as Mobile Phone Misuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restorative justice sessions requested from EA - Possible external suspension - Referral to Designated Teacher for assessment - Potential PSNI involvement - Potential Social Services involvement if safeguarding concerns are raised - Recorded on SIMS as Inappropriate use of Mobile Phone
Cyberbullying outside of school (impacting the education of others)	<p><i>Refer to the Addressing Bullying Policy for specific actions regarding all types of bullying. Cyberbullying should be escalated to a 'moderate concern' due to its potential emotional and mental impact</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal warning or internal suspension - Parents contacted via phone call - BCAF generated - Behaviour Contract generated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restorative justice sessions requested from EA - Possible external suspension - Referral to Designated Teacher for assessment - Potential PSNI involvement (parents of the student experiencing bullying are advised by the school they can contact the PSNI themselves) - Potential Social Services involvement if safeguarding concerns are raised
Uploading information/content which brings the school into disrepute	<p><i>This is treated as a severe concern because it can significantly damage the reputation of the school, undermine trust within the school community, and negatively impact the wellbeing of students and staff. Such actions can also lead to wider consequences beyond the school environment, including legal implications. As a result, the school responds immediately and seriously to protect its integrity and ensure a safe and respectful environment for all.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phone confiscated and possible suspension - Parents contacted via phone call - Potential PSNI involvement - Potential Social Services involvement if safeguarding concerns are raised - Recorded on SIMS as Inappropriate use of Mobile Phone
Organising or encouraging bad behaviour using a device within school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phone confiscated - Parents notified using the parent app - After school detention issued - Record on SIMS as Mobile Phone Misuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phone confiscated - Parents notified via phone call - After school detention issued - Possible suspension - Record on SIMS as Mobile Phone Misuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents contacted and invited into school for a parental meeting - Internal or external suspension depending on severity. - Behaviour contract - Possible PSNI involvement if criminal offences are being organised (e.g., assault, serious disruption). - Designated Teacher referral if the student is inciting dangerous acts - Possible Social Services referral if vulnerability or exploitation is suspected - Recorded on SIMS as Inappropriate use of Mobile Phone
Use of Mobile Phone/electronic device in a Public Examination	<p><i>The use of mobile phones during public examinations is strictly forbidden. Students are strongly advised not to bring a mobile phone into any public examination hall.</i></p> <p><i>Additionally, students in Junior School are not permitted to have their mobile phones during Winter or Summer examinations, in preparation for the expectations and rules they will encounter in their later GCSE studies.</i></p> <p><i>Due to the seriousness of concerns surrounding public examinations, any breach of this rule is automatically treated as a 'severe concern', even if it is a first offence.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phone confiscated - Parental contact - Potential disqualification from the exam paper or whole subject (exam board rules, e.g., CCEA regulations). - Report to awarding body (mandatory) - PSNI may be contacted if there is evidence of fraud - Recorded on SIMS as Inappropriate use of Mobile Phone
Inappropriate use of social media outside of school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents notified via phone call - Discussed with student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents notified via phone call - Phone confiscated - Discussed with student - After school detention issued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phone confiscated and possible suspension - After school detention issued - Parents contacted via phone call - Potential PSNI involvement - Potential Social Services involvement if safeguarding concerns are raised

General Note:

For any case where a phone is confiscated and police involvement is needed, the school must follow proper evidence handling rules, which includes locking the phone in the safe in the front office, within an envelope with the students name, DOB and the member of staff who confiscated the phone written on the envelope. The phone should be switched off.

Safeguarding always comes first — if there's any risk of harm, the Safeguarding Team must be involved and a Social Services referral must happen even if police are not involved. If the concerns relate to Child Abuse the PSNI Central Referral Unit will always be contacted by the school.

ADVICE TO PARENTS

Please avoid communicating with your child on their mobile phones during the day. If there is an emergency situation where you must contact your child at any time, please phone the school on 90 867431 and we will contact your child immediately.

In the case of emergency or medical necessity, arrangements are in place for communication between school and home. Students may access the use of a phone via their Class Tutor, Head of Year, or the School Office.

The staff will continue to contact parents/ carers directly in the event of an emergency or sickness. These measures have been implemented to safeguard the welfare of pupils and to enable staff and pupils to focus on learning, rather than staff having to spend an excessive amount of time following up on a range of pastoral matters linked to the inappropriate use of mobile phones, or other devices, during the school day.

Abbey Community College is not responsible for mobile phones, or other devices, that are brought into the school building and we will not investigate the loss, damage or theft of these devices.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Sanction Pathway

Sanction	Mobile Phones	Smartphones	Tablets	Wearable Devices
Verbal warning	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Written warning	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Exclusion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

MOBILE PHONE GUIDE


Useful Websites

Text Bullying
www.bullyonline.org
www.stoptextbully.com
www.childline.org.uk
www.nch.org.uk

Internet Safety
www.thinkuknow.co.uk
www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com
www.getsafeonline.org
www.chatdanger.com
www.websafecrackerz.com



CREATING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



MOBILE PHONE GUIDELINES

MOBILE PHONES/DEVICES use in school

Abbey Community College recognises mobile phones/devices as being an integral part of youth culture. However, the duty of care for each and every child in the school is paramount and this policy will attempt to weigh the balance between child protection and the safe use of mobile phones/devices in school.

Key Terms

- Devices** - A mobile phone or device which can record still and/or moving images and audio recordings.
- Smart Watches** - Watches that have the ability to do everything a mobile phone or device can do.
- Bluetooth** - Proximity transfer of information between phones using wireless or infrared technology.
- Cyberbullying** - The use of text, pictures or video clips to harass or bully another student either directly to their phone or spread to other phones or the internet.
- Social Media** - The range of platforms/apps that children use to communicate such as Snapchat, Facebook & Instagram.

Mobile Phones/Devices use in school

Students are permitted to carry mobile phones/devices into school, in their bags or internal blazer pockets.

Abbey Community College does not accept responsibility for damage to, nor loss of, a mobile phone/device regardless of the circumstances.

Mobile phones can only be used up to 8.55 am, during break time and at lunchtime.

They must not be used in class or in corridors between lessons.

Under no circumstances is any student permitted to take a photo/video/sound recording on the school premises. Students who do this will be the subject of a disciplinary enquiry.

Any student found to be up-loading recordings to the internet depicting the College brand, or involving staff or children in school uniforms, will be the subject of a disciplinary enquiry. The College reserves the right to suspend or expel a student for this action.

The use of mobile phones/devices is strictly prohibited in the examination hall. This means they should be switched off and handed to the invigilator. According to exam regulations, if students are found with mobile phones/devices they run the risk of being disqualified from public examinations.


Advice to Parents

Please avoid communicating with your child on their mobile phones during the day. If there is an emergency situation where you must contact your child at any time, please phone the school on 90 867431 and we will contact your child immediately.


In the case of emergency or medical necessity, arrangements are in place for communication between school and home. Students may access the use of a phone via their Class Tutor, Head of Year, or the School Office.

The staff will continue to contact parents/ carers directly in the event of an emergency or sickness. These measures have been implemented to safeguard the welfare of pupils and to enable staff and pupils to focus on learning, rather than staff having to spend an excessive amount of time following up on a range of pastoral matters linked to the inappropriate use of mobile phones, or other devices, during the school day.

Abbey Community College is not responsible for mobile phones, or other devices, that are brought into the school building and we will not investigate the loss, damage or theft of these devices.



Download the SaferSchools NI app to access latest information related to the use of mobile phones and social media



AUDIT/ SURVEY TIMELINE

	Staff	Parents	Students
Mobile Phone (Google Form)	May 2023 - SDD	June 2023 (149 responses)	to be discussed at Student Council

MOBILE PHONE POLICY REVIEW TIMELINE

January – June 2026

January 2026: Review Planning and Preparation

- Review the current Mobile Phone Policy, noting issues, inconsistencies, and areas needing update.
- Gather initial staff feedback through an online form.
- Draft survey questions for staff, students, and parents/guardians.

February 2026: Stakeholder Consultation

- Launch surveys for all stakeholder groups:
 - Students: via tutor time or online form
 - Parents/Guardians: via ParentMail, Google Forms, or school app
 - Staff: via staff briefing and online form
- Hold optional focus group sessions with key stakeholders (e.g., Student Council, pastoral team).
- Promote the consultation through Form Time Announcements and assemblies.

March 2026: Data Analysis and Initial Drafting

- Collect and analyse all survey responses.
- Identify key themes, common issues, and stakeholder priorities.
- Draft an updated version of the Mobile Phone Policy based on findings.
- Review the draft internally with the SLT and Safeguarding Team.

April 2026: Wider Review and Feedback

- Share the draft with:
 - Heads of Year and Departments for operational feedback.
 - Student Council for additional perspectives.
- Refine the policy based on this feedback.

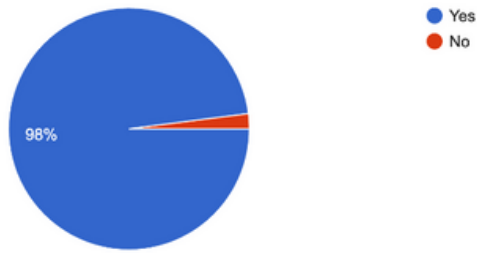
May 2026: Finalisation and Approval

- Give the revised policy to the Board of Governors for ratification.
- Develop an implementation plan, including:
 - Staff briefing sessions
 - Student assemblies presentations
 - Parent communication via parent message

PARENT FEEDBACK

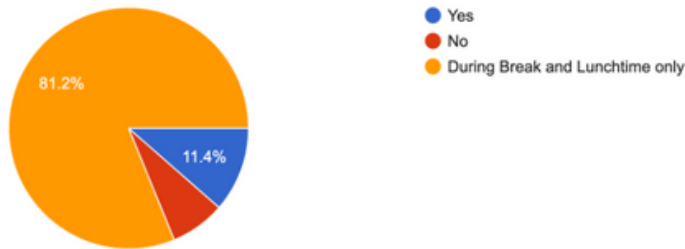
Does your son/ daughter take their mobile phone to school?

149 responses



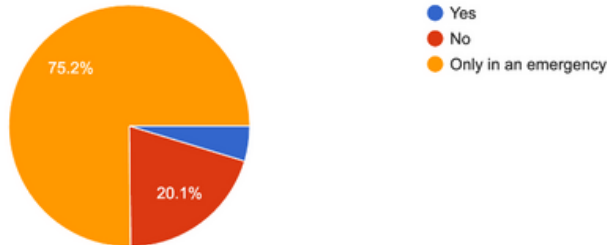
Do you think students should be allowed to use their phone during the school day?

149 responses



Do you think that it is appropriate to contact your child during school lesson time by either a phone call or text?

149 responses



17. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Acting Vice Principal of Pastoral Care and approved by the Board of Governors for dissemination to parents, students, and staff. It will be implemented through the school's staff induction and training programme and embedded in everyday pastoral and classroom practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis by the Acting Vice Principal of Pastoral Care and the Pastoral Leaders. The Board of Governors will also monitor the effectiveness of the policy and its implementation through regular reports and updates provided by the Acting Vice Principal of Pastoral Care.

Date Policy Reviewed:

Signed:

_____ (Chair of Board of Governors)

_____ (Principal)

_____ (Acting Vice Principal)



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